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**"After independence we will have to stand on our own and rely on our own resources, the unifying force, the cement…which had hitherto been supplied by the United Kingdom Government will be removed, and will have to be replaced by new virtues of our own which must be capable of keeping all the diverse elements of the country together, in mutual trust and harmony and with a common national purpose."  
Excerpt taken from Awo, the Autobiography of Chief Obafemi Awolowo of Nigeria.**  
After the Second World War people in Africa wanted change. Only Egypt, Liberia and Ethiopia were independent at that point. But it was Indian self-rule which triggered the momentum leading to independence. Everywhere the mood was hopeful as people were inspired by the vision of a new society free of European control.  
  
In Southern Africa, European settlers wanted to cut the ties with Britain and Portugal, but retain white minority rule, excluding the African population. The fighting resulting from this was violent and destructive to the infrastructure of the countries involved and their independent neighbors. Burdened by apartheid (South African racial segregation) for decades, South Africans were the last people on the continent to attain majority rule. Meanwhile the Cold War conflict between America and the Soviet Union distorted politics at a regional level particularly in the South.  
  
Attaining economic independence proved harder than gaining political independence. In some areas drought and famine destroyed agricultural production; elsewhere war has brought economic activity to a halt.  
  
Political instability on the continent has been both the result and cause of economic difficulties. The cost of living has spiraled, hitting a fast growing urban population.  
  
Attempts to create a strong manufacturing base failed in the main; many African currencies went through substantial periods when they could not be converted into Western currencies.   
  
These negative trends have both caused the intervention of western economic institutions, like the IMF and World Bank, and been the result of that intervention. As a consequence there has been a steady migration of people from the continent to Europe and America looking for a better and more stable quality of life.